



## THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MANSFIELD, CONNECTICUT

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It is hard to believe that a full month of the school year is behind us already. I have continued to implement the entry plan I shared with you in my September 2nd communication spending time in schools, observing instruction, working with teachers and administrators, and meeting with parents and community members. I will use the next month to both continue this process and prepare summaries of my “findings” to share with various members of our school and town community. This has been an important time for me as it has allowed me to build understanding and knowledge before taking action. By the end of this new month, I expect to be engaged in actions to help us set direction for the future and address some of the more pressing matters that have been identified. Among these areas are such things as establishing a clear vision and direction for the future, attending to literacy instructional needs, and clarifying programs designed to meet the needs of both struggling students and those who seek a challenge.

In addition, we continue to devote a great deal of time to addressing concerns about transportation, especially regarding the new bus stops established this summer. Here too, much attention has been given to moving forward. Each concern that has been expressed has been investigated for safety issues. We evaluate the stop against the safety expectations in our policy and have asked for the assistance of our town Traffic Authority when needed. This has led to the change in some routes. Our time study has also helped us assess whether we might have room to add back stops in some neighborhoods. Our current bus routes are very tight. Students are just arriving at school on time in the mornings and we still have some buses arriving to our elementary schools later than we would like in the afternoon. To make more progress with timeliness, it appears that a complete revision of the routes is needed and it is expected that this will result in a significant amount of change for students and families. We may also have to consider an adjustment to our school start and end times. These are both actions we will consider for the future. In my most recent meeting with Durham School Services, I reiterated our intentions to hold them responsible for their contractual obligations. We have taken steps to impose penalties when their obligations are not met. They have upheld their agreement to do more to attract and maintain bus drivers and continue to increase the number of drivers in their pool. We are in the final year of our contract with Durham and are developing a bid process to commence later this fall for a new contract. I have received a good deal of input from parents that will help us establish service expectations in a new contract. Should you wish to share your thoughts with me, please send an e-mail to [MBOESupt@mansfieldct.org](mailto:MBOESupt@mansfieldct.org).

It has been a very full, but very fulfilling first weeks in this new position. I continue to be awed by the work that I see happening in our schools. We have an extremely talented group of teachers and administrators, and delightful, well behaved, engaged students. In just the last week I have been invited to play house by preschoolers, treated to inspiring musical performances by our orchestra students, and witness to middle schoolers giving feedback to Google about a new app they are testing. Mansfield Schools are a great place to be!